

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

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Markey Demands a Full Accounting and Report on Missing Nuclear Materials

Missing Fuel Rods at Nuclear Power Plant Raise 'Dirty Bomb' Concerns

Washington, DC: Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the panel which oversees nuclear power regulation, today released the following statement regarding the missing nuclear rods from the spent fuel storage pool at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Powerplant:

"Once again the material that could be fashioned by terrorists into a 'dirty bomb' has disappeared from a secure nuclear facility right here in the United States. We all share the hope of the spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that the two missing fuel rods are only hiding deep in the storage pool; but hoping is not believing.

The NRC continually responds to such cases of missing radioactive materials with a laissez-faire attitude, telling the public that they're probably lying around "somewhere". When will the NRC realize that "somewhere" could end up being in a dirty bomb detonated in the middle of an American city? It is time for the NRC to crack down on those responsible for these materials, implement new security regulations, and impose high penalties for those who don't comply.

The security of radioactive dirty bomb materials is paramount in this age of terrorism, and it is not sufficient to have the persons responsible for the whereabouts of these two rods speculating about innocent explanations when it is perfectly possible that the material has been stolen. Today I will be sending a letter to the NRC calling on the Commission to conduct a full inventory of the nation's legacy of spent nuclear fuel and other radioactive materials and to report to Congress regarding what is missing and what is not. The war on terror will not succeed if we tolerate sloppy security at the potential sources of dirty bomb material, including especially the spent fuel facilities at our nation's nuclear power plants."

Rep. Markey is the author of the Dirty Bomb Prevention Act and has repeatedly attempted to prod the NRC into action on the problem of unaccounted-for dirty bomb materials, such as the case of 8 missing highly radioactive cesium sources.. For more information on the Dirty Bomb Prevention Act and the problem of missing dirty bomb materials, please go to <http://www.house.gov/markey/dirtybombs.htm>.

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